

## Letter from John S. Smith to Juliana Reynolds, November 25, 1862

Camp near Fredericksburg, VA

Nov 25th 1862

Mrs Juliana Reynolds

My Dear Sister,

It is a long time since I have written to you, and I feel that I have acted somewhat disrespectful in not replying to your letters before as I have received two letters from you which I have neglected to answer until now. The last letter I received from you was written when you were in Washington. It came to hand soon after we left Poolesville. I was sorry that you could not come to the regiment, as it would have been a great satisfaction to have conversed with one so near to me by the ties of nature. But that happy privilege I may never enjoy in this life. Life is uncertain any where but far more in the army than it would be in our peaceful and quiet homes. The soldier is not only slaughtered upon the battle field, but he is ever exposed to diseases accumulated by the exposures of camp life, which is bringing thousands of our brave soldiers to an untimely grave. I do not however blame you in the least for not coming as the expense would have been considerable and you saw the one you came to see without coming to the regiment.

We are again on our way to Richmond but whether we will succeed in getting there is for time to determine. Our army has been quite unsuccessful in Virginia. We have been doing a good business in other places but in Va we have done comparatively nothing. But the army we have in the field at the present time should and no doubt will accomplish something. But if we fail in taking Richmond during this campaign the Southern

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Confederacy will probably be acknowledged by foreign nations. If we cannot conquer the South with the vast army we now have we may come to the conclusion that Providence is against us. I flatter myself with the hope that the war will be over by next spring but if it should not I fear it will be more terrible than ever. We are now about three miles from Fredericksburg which is yet in possession of the rebels, they occupy one side of the Rappahannock and we the other and our pickets and theirs can converse with each other. I dont know when we are going to cross the Rappahannock to take possession of Fredericksburg but I presume when we do the rebels will dispute our passage as they seam disposed to keep us on this side of the river but that they will know doubt fail to accomplish.

We have rather an uncomfortable time of it not having comfortable quarters, and the weather is quite cold, especially at night. It will probably be some time before we will go into winter quarters. I think there will be an attempt to take Richmond first. Tilton is in good health and appears to enjoy him self quite well. I hope the time may soon come when I will not be obliged to write to you but that I may have the privilege of conversing with you personally. Give my respects to all enquiring friends. Write soon. I remain your affectionate brother.

J.S. Smith